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## Corporate Social Responsibility in Professional Sports: Perceptions and Demographics

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Corporate Social Responsibility in Professional Sports: Perceptions and Demographics


By

William Paterson

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in the Discipline in the Department of Business, the Department of Communications and the Elizabethtown College Honors Program

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Corporate Social Responsibility in Professional Sports: Perceptions and Demographics

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### **Abstract**

In America, businesses are looking for ways to truly connect with their customers and key publics. This concept is especially prevalent in sports organizations such as the National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Basketball Association (NBA), and professional tennis. These leagues utilize corporate social responsibility (CSR) messaging to encourage engagement both in the stadium and at home, all the while trying to promote something everyone can enjoy. But, how effective is this messaging? Does utilizing these messaging strategies correlate with increased positive attitudes and greater engagement in sports? There has been some research done into the sociology of sports, which discusses why sports organizations are believed to carry so much weight. The purpose of this research is to determine if certain types of CSR messaging will resonate differently with various groups, which vary with respect to personality, psychographic disposition, or demographics. A survey was conducted where change in attitude about a sports team was measured. Respondents were asked a series of questions related to their engagement with sports. They were then shown a series of CSR promotions developed by the NFL. Upon seeing those promotions, they were asked the same survey questions. The goal was to determine if the CSR messaging influenced participants' likelihood to watch the sports team. Business owners and social media professionals can benefit from this study because it gives them insight into consumer preferences and what types of messaging motivates consumers to continue engaging with a certain business or team. This knowledge could aid in guiding businesses decisions with respect to consumer engagement via CSR messaging. The methodology is a survey that will be sent to members of the student body, the faculty and the alumni who accepted to take part in the survey. The survey analyzes questions about social causes the participant feels close to, and then they are asked questions

about their feelings toward the National Football League's use of corporate social responsibility (CSR) messaging. They are then shown multiple examples of NFL messages featuring CSR initiatives, and they are asked to comment on them (their effectiveness, their likeability, etc.).

### **Literature Review**

There are many definitions for corporate social responsibility, and different companies and businesses have found various ways to incorporate these policies into everything they do. According to Carroll (1991), "The total corporate social responsibility of business entails the simultaneous fulfillment of the firm's economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities" (p. 43). The European Commission (2011) describes CSR as "the responsibility of enterprises for their impact on society" which can be fully realized by following the law and integrating "social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy" (p. 6). The United Nations defines CSR policies as a way for businesses to "integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders" (United Nations, 2020).

All of these definitions are centralized around the concept that CSR is incorporated by business managers to promote their company. By incorporating these policies, they are able to market themselves to key constituents and their customers. CSR is important to businesses because it gives them a competitive advantage; it shows they are willing to be a part of a positive change in their society, their environment, and in their communities. Global corporations develop world-wide campaigns to better their stakeholders on a macro-level; other businesses lead local campaigns.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is used by corporations to raise awareness to larger sociological causes facing our country and the world. There is also growing evidence to support

the theory that corporations integrating corporate social responsibility in their operations intend to increase promotions and positive word of mouth, thus anticipating an impact on the bottom line. The literature reviewed here reflects both the positive and the skeptical view of CSR and aims to understand the impact of CSR messaging on different target segments of the NFL.

Chang, Kong, Connaughton, and Kang (2016) tried to understand how sports teams and organizations utilize CSR messaging to build relationships with key stakeholders; however, “theories to explain this phenomenon have received very little scholarly attention to date” (Chang et. al., p. 1). This paper will address this phenomenon.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility Messaging**

Some research has been done to determine what is the best way for a company to engage with their stakeholders. According to Dartey-Baah and Amponsah-Taiwah (2011), “The concept is constantly being reexamined and redefined to serve changing needs and times” (p. 126). The way businesses define being an active member of their communities can change, as well. Corporations develop world-wide campaigns to better their constituents on a macro-level; other businesses lead local campaigns. These ideas are important to identify what CSR means in the eyes of others.

The National Football League (NFL), for example, has shifted its advertising and promotional focus around fostering a stronger community orientation. Through their social media campaigns and CSR promotions during the game, they address a plethora of issues that their key stakeholders are concerned about therefore, they use the game to generate a feeling of belonging where all the fans and spectators can come together and watch their team play. According to Benson (2017), “The league’s CSR initiatives are also intended to engender mass feeling, melding multiple images and rhetorics, invoking techno-scientific progress as much as

corporate care, family values, suburban comfort, national sentimentality, soft masculinity, and women's health. Through strategic public relations, the campaign organizes a certain affective and cognitive anti-politics, a depoliticized way of conceptualizing and experiencing football that reflects a wider matrix of intelligibility framing what is normal and legible with regard to race, gender, and precarity in the United States" (p. 307). The NFL has developed a strategy about how they address key societal issues. In October, the league raises awareness for breast cancer. Calling it *A Crucial Catch* campaign, they make donations to cancer research institutions working to find a cure. On the field, athletes show their support wearing pink towels, cleats and gloves. In November, they begin their *Salute to Service* campaign. They show their appreciation to the men and women who serve in all the branches of the armed forces. On the field, players will wear camouflage gloves and hats. The NFL also encourages each of their 32 teams to lead CSR initiatives in their respective part of the country. At Levi's Stadium – home of the San Francisco 49ers – athletes flew the *Black Lives Matter* flag in support of racial equality. For some teams, they will paint the words *A Crucial Catch* and *Salute to Service* on the field in support of the campaigns.

Another channel businesses use to promote CSR policies to their key publics is social media. According to Statista (2021) – an independent statistics website – 91.7% of businesses in the United States promote themselves using social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. In 2022, that number is expected to grow to 92.1%. According to Appel et. al. (2019), the number of monthly users is reportedly 2.38 billion and 1.56 daily users (p. 79). It is not a surprise that social media has been embraced as another channel for businesses to connect with their key stakeholders. Baglione and Tucci (2019) discuss the growth of social media in recent years, and how it has revolutionized the way consumers are able to interact with



each other and with businesses. It has become one of the latest avenues for businesses to promote CSR messages to their stakeholders.

With the emergence of social media, it is important to understand how CSR can be impacted by multiple different external factors with regards to social media engagement. For their study, Devlin and Sheehan (2018) analyzed *A Crucial Catch*, a CSR campaign initiated by the NFL to raise awareness for Breast Cancer Awareness and found that teams who had better season records generated more traffic to their Facebook page surrounding CSR-focused content. On the other hand, teams that consistently lost more games than they won did not get as much attention. With this research, it draws the conclusion that developing a social media campaign to promote CSR causes is only successful depending on the team's success. It also draws the conclusion that individual perceptions of key stakeholders may not identify with CSR campaigns; rather, they see them as other avenues of self-promotion.

Research also suggests that CSR has altered societal standards and the language corporations use. According to O'Kelly (2019), corpus linguistics "involves the study of language as represented in large bodies of texts" (p. 626). She argues that as societal standards change, so do the words of policies ranging from annual earnings reports to the CSR reports. O'Kelly (2019) analyzed the boilerplates of different companies that were written at the end of the CSR reports. The idea was to see a change in the use of grammar and word choice. Other factors she considered were the amount of skepticism from the reader(s). She wanted to understand if the language used was convincing, or if their messaging strategy is not convincing their stakeholders. While she believes that skepticism is reasonable when analyzing corporate messaging, O'Kelly said (2019), "Corporate speech is nonetheless worthy of study as a kind of action bringing itself to bear upon the world" (p. 625).

According to Bourdeaux (2016), The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) used positive messaging when addressing their mission and core values; however, many officials within FIFA were guilty of embezzlement and fraud in 2015. While these allegations stayed with FIFA for a long time, Bourdeaux (2016) provided evidence that they are working to move past it. Bourdeaux (2016) argues that, because FIFA is a nonprofit, they “receive far less oversight, but are subject to regulation from both the country where they are incorporated, and the country where they operate” (p. 1). In other words, FIFA officials were more likely to be taken at their word when using messaging about building a global community atmosphere.

### **A Positive View of Corporate Social Responsibility**

Some researchers argue companies and organizations utilize CSR policies to reinforce and modify attitudes of their key publics, thus positively contributing to society (Lulek & Sadowski, 2020). According to Babiak and Wolfe (2009), companies utilize CSR promotional tactics not only to raise awareness of important issues facing society, but also to help them gain “free positive press they can share with media outlets in press releases” (p. 718). They provided multiple examples, one of which was the National Basketball Association (NBA). In 2002, the NBA launched the Read to Achieve Initiative, which they started as “a community outreach initiative implemented by individual teams to encourage youth to read” (Babiak et. al., p. 719). Research has also been conducted on how CSR is connected to innovation in the retail industry, tapping into consumer behavior has also been conducted. In other words, CSR can be utilized to help drive innovation and consumer awareness to that innovation. According to Ubius and Alas (2012), even with the extensive research into connecting CSR and innovation, there have not been as many studies analyzing that connection. There has also been little research done

examining firm performance and how they address the innovation climate's connection to certain demographics (gender, age, race, education level, etc.) (p. 310).

There are other companies that have initiated CSR campaigns that have become a part of their company culture. Comcast initiated *Comcast Cares*, one of the largest corporate commitments to volunteerism and positive change in the United States. They have engaged with millions of volunteers throughout the country, encouraging volunteers to rebuild their communities and inspire change. In addition, the LEGO company is continuing to build on its pledge to reduce their carbon footprint and is working towards 100% renewable energy by the year 2030. Sports organizations and teams also engage with CSR policies. Nike partnered with former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick and designed a social media campaign to promote racial equality, especially within the world of sports. Nike gained more positive word of mouth (WOM) and also large consumer optimism in their brand (Heffron, 2019).

Sport organizations also incorporate CSR into their company culture. The National Football League developed the Pledge to Play 60, a CSR campaign developed to encourage children and young adults to be more active, encouraging healthier lifestyle choices (Godfrey, 2009). By promoting the CSR programs and policies, companies are able to build on the idea of fostering a holistic community both internally and externally in their communities.

Sports leagues also use the positive press from CSR to help increase ticket sales and ratings for their games and special events. The National Hockey League (NHL) was voted one of the most environmentally friendly sports leagues in the world for their work to reduce their carbon footprint. Started in 2008, their objective was "to offset carbon emissions, as well as recycling efforts during games and major events have been implemented" (Babiak et. al., p. 717). Specifically, they tried to reduce the amount of plastics and corrugate waste used for food

services and other related areas. Their hope was to decrease the amount of trash, calling it the *Play It Forward* campaign. It gained international attention; as a result, it played a role in the NHL's ability to increase their average viewership per game by 0.6 million in two years with 4.6 million viewers in 2008 and 5.2 million viewers in 2010 (Johnson & Ali, p. 49). According to Johnson and Ali (2018), they were given multiple awards for their policies and developing more sustainable operating practices to work hand-in-hand with their plans to be more environmentally friendly. However, another factor Johnson and Ali (2018) raised was the inconsistent promotion of environmentalism messages. Johnson and Ali (2018) said, "Within this approach, environmentalism is often championed in symbolic terms, whereas commitment to it in practice fluctuates based on the financial needs of the organization" (p. 51). In 2015, the NHL was asked "to present on a special sport panel showcasing the green leaders of the sport industry, which was hosted as part of the COP 21 United Nations climate change talks in Paris" (Johnson & Ali, 2018, p. 49).

These examples speak to an overarching theme where sports organizations place emphasis on promoting messages that will create a strong public image. The NFL, the NHL, and the NBA may have chosen alternate messages to promote; however, their goal is ultimately the same. They seek to increase their fanbase, having more people watch games. The different sports leagues mentioned in this section provide examples of how different tactics accomplish the same goal.

### **A Skeptical View of Corporate Social Responsibility**

In contrast, there are some that argue businesses only engage in CSR because they want to deviate attention away from problems they are facing – problems that could exponentially decrease profits and audience size. According to Yoon (2006), "CSR activities are consistent

with a naive business theory that assumes that consumers will take the activity at face value and attribute positive characteristics to the company, resulting in a more favorable evaluation. This naive theory dovetails with an extensive body of attribution research that demonstrates a pervasive correspondence bias” (p. 377). Sports organizations have developed bad reputations in certain circles due to large scandals, preventing some from completely moving past the negative press. While Nike promotes racial equality, they also have sweatshops in different parts of the world where people manufacture their shoes for low pay (Mosher, 2020). Penn State University continues to struggle with the aftermath of the Gerry Sandusky abuse scandal while trying to promote their football program to prospective students (CNN, 2020). Former physician Larry Nassar of the USA’s women national gymnastics team was found guilty of abusing gymnasts dating back to 1992 (Associated Press, 2021). Yoon (2006) made an argument that holds true across each of these examples; none of these organizations handled the situation well. While many people lost their reputations, many also are being placed in a negative spotlight that fans will never forget.

In the early 2000s, the NFL was dealing with a plethora of negative press from forensic pathologist Dr. Bennet Omalu, who had discovered neurological deterioration in football players’ brains due to excessive head-to-head contact. The NFL stated they would launch an internal investigation to ensure the problem would be fixed. However, as more former players began taking their own lives, people no longer believed the NFL was doing everything they could to truly uncover the problem and provide solutions (Laskas, 2009). The NFL tried to create CSR promotions to inform their key publics and stakeholders to maintain confidence and to reinforce the attitudes that the NFL is looking out for all their players.

Malcolm (2018) also evaluated the sociology of sports organizations, and how large corporations are deprioritizing the health and safety of their players, thus misinforming millions of Americans as to how safe these sports really are. Malcolm stated (2018) he wanted to study and explore the NFL's "emerging agenda in relation to concussion in sport to illustrate the threats and opportunities currently faced by the sociology of sport as an academic sub-discipline" (p. 142). He also raises the issues of sociologists wanting to bring to the forefront that athletes' health are being placed second while making money and generating a large fan base are placed first.

There are some researchers who argue CSR is failing altogether. According to Visser (2010), "The logic is simple and compelling. A doctor judges his/her success by whether the patient is getting better (healthier) or worse (sicker). Similarly, we should judge the success of CSR by whether our communities and ecosystems are getting better or worse" (p. 7). If the initiatives taken can provide positive results and improvements in the community, then they are successful. However, Visser argues there is no concrete evidence CSR tactics work. He does not see any value coming out of CSR initiatives on a large scale. Businesses have moved through different ages, and the definition of CSR has changed along with it (Visser, 2010). Attached below is a chart that highlights the key economic ages, stages of CSR, key holder, and stakeholder targets as seen by Visser (see Appendix A).

### **Public Perception of Corporate Social Responsibility**

In order to communicate more effectively with their various audiences, businesses will change their tactics, their language, and methods of promotion. Devlin and Sheehan (2018) conducted research on this topic, examining how NFL fans and other publics responded to their corporate social responsibility messaging on Facebook. They wanted to analyze the different

Facebook pages for each of the football teams to see if there were any factors that influenced how much online traffic they had coming in. According to the article, “The current study examines the type of message NFL teams use and how individuals respond to communication strategies surrounding *A Crucial Catch* by using Charity Support Behavior (CSB), news framing, and team identity theory as a guide” (Devlin, Sheehan, 2018, p. 477). A team’s strategy designed to showcase CSR could possibly exceed goodwill for their community, thus becoming a campaign on social media to merely gain popularity and name recognition on social media. In an act of promoting selflessness, they unintentionally promote their own self-interests and desires (Devlin et. al., 2018). In short, by attempting to appeal to women and causes the team share, their only objective appeared to be making themselves sound better. Because they did not sound authentic in their messaging, they received negative results.

Some research has been conducted around the idea that more creative CSR policies – spread by word of mouth – will generate more traction, and therefore more positive feedback. In one article, Feldman (2013) discusses how CSR allows businesses to promote their company and their products in different and more creative ways. By conducting a campaign for the business’ immediate community or larger scale contribution, it will incentivize people to look over their products and services. According to Feldman (2013), using these strategies can reinforce positive attitudes in stakeholders’ eyes. It will encourage positive word-of-mouth, fend off negative stories in the press, and promote themselves as a wholesome organization. This research is important in understanding the effectiveness of CSR policies on different age demographics.

Research has also been conducted into how different personality types respond to different CSR promotions. Analyzing the differences between extraverts and introverts is a tool

which marketers can use to develop appeal to different customers and stakeholders (Itani et al., 2020, p.2). According to Jensen-Campbell and Graziano (2001), one of the major goals of extraverts is make a social impact, benefitting those around them. Yoo and Gretzel (2011), not only are extraverts expected to be more outgoing in face-to-face atmosphere, but they are also more likely to be engaging in social communications (i.e., social media). On the other hand, introverts are more likely to keep to themselves and not share their beliefs with other people. As businesses seek to identify and connect with their target stakeholders, they need to learn more about the characteristics of their audience. According to Itani, Haddad, and Kalra (2020), “Customers who engage in sharing their experiences and knowledge with firms are, collectively, considered as assets to these firms. This is why firms are interested in identifying these customers” (p. 4). Considering this information, extraverts are more likely to share their reactions to CSR campaigns, as they feel more comfortable sharing their feelings and opinions.

There has also been research conducted into how social media can be utilized to develop CSR campaigns, and how they tailor their messages depending on the audience. Certain social media platforms have a larger older age demographic. According to Pew Research Center (2019), “Facebook use is relatively common across a range of age groups, with 68% of those ages 50 to 64 and nearly half of those 65 and older saying they use the site.” Other platforms including Instagram and Snapchat – known for more visual media postings - have a younger demographic with 67% and 62% of 18 to 29-year-olds, respectively. For 50 to 64-year-olds, 70% use YouTube and 68% use Facebook. According to Papacharissi and Rubin (2000), “those who were more mobile, economically secure, satisfied with life, and comfortable with interpersonal interaction preferred more information seeking via the Internet” (p. 476). On the other hand, those who were less happy with their life used the Internet as a means of passing the time,



escaping the struggles of their own life. Thus age, generation, and contextual age may all influence one's motivations to use specific channels of communication, which can ultimately change how an organization lays out their CSR promotional strategy.

The research examined will be utilized to provide a foundation for the thesis of the research as to whether different age demographics have various responses when it comes to CSR policies. Research has looked into how businesses utilize demographics to better craft their CSR promotions and tactics. Armstrong, Butryn, Andrews, and Masucci (2018) highlighted the importance of demographics in a research article. The key issues discussed were the importance of geography, the importance of language, determining who to support, and linking CSR with organizational values. Research has also been conducted to understand the role stewardship plays in influencing use of CSR policies. According to Waters, Burke, Jackson, and Buning (2011), the ability to recognize immediate stakeholder needs – the fans – and show them consistent gratitude for supporting their organization should be a top priority for the NFL. This technique of stewardship has been echoed for many different sports organizations; focusing on the NFL, the argument being made is that because fans have consistently been watching NFL games, the NFL thanks them by promoting what they believe to be their key stakeholders' important issues. For example, they recognize that a majority of their players and fans are African American; therefore, in an effort to thank them for their continued support, they promote messages such as "It takes all of us" and "End racism."

Sorek and White (2016) found different results. According to Sorek and White (2016), national pride and enthusiasm for football "are interrelated and that the nature of their relation depends on race" (p. 9). Their research found that a feeling of national pride was a driving force for how different races engaged with the NFL; African Americans enjoy watching the games.

However, they feel the messages promoted during the games are not their messages, but messages that only benefit white fans. Sorek and White (2016) did state because data was limited in this area their assertions were only speculative; however, there was a clear distinction in levels of national pride between white and black fans. This speaks to psychographics, because having pride in a country is an attitude, and different people have various levels of national pride. It has a unique value to certain people. However, research has been conducted in this area.

Regarding geography, Armstrong et. al. (2018) centralized around the concept “that CSR-related decisions, which may be deemed appropriate by shareholders... in the San Francisco Area, may not be deemed appropriate by stakeholders in similar positions in other regions and countries” (p. 110). So, something that might be a huge societal influence in New York City may not be as large an influence in Boise, Idaho. This information could serve as a contradiction, as the purpose of this research is to understand the effectiveness of CSR messaging on different age demographics in sports organizations.

Regarding language, Armstrong et. al. (2018) addressed that “certain industry professionals consider [the phrase CSR] to be loaded, and perhaps capable of eliciting negative responses from fans and corporate sponsors” (p. 111). This information can provide valuable insight, because businesses are carefully choosing their dialogue when it comes to addressing racial tensions and police brutality. Organizations in the sports industry recognize the importance of using positive dialogue, and by incorporating recent and relevant research, the data shows an increased use of dialogue which demonstrates their commitment to racial equality which is a prominent CSR message many sports organizations are promoting.

While the incorporation of demographics has been essential when companies consider how to launch their CSR campaigns, there is evidence to suggest using psychographics to

determine who are the target audiences for promotional strategies goes deeper. Psychographics are not surface level research, as some have described demographics; rather, psychographics seeks to understand different lifestyles, attitudes, and perceptions about certain matters. In this case, psychographics can help understand why a person seeks to support one company over another. The purpose of this research is to determine if certain promotions will resonate with different age demographics, or if there is a deeper connection to why people resonate with certain messages. Do people's attitudes and feelings about a brand transcend age, race and gender? Or can consumers unite behind a company because the CSR policies they implement draw a parallel to how they conduct their lives?

### **Connecting Corporate Social Responsibility and Sports**

There has been some research done into the sociology of sports, which answers the question why sports organizations are believed to carry so much weight. According to Coakley (2015), sports enthusiasts believe "the purity and goodness of sport is transmitted to those who participate in or consume it... sport inevitably leads to individual and community development" (p. 402). There is evidence to suggest teams play a vital role in building stronger communities. According to Chow and Healey (2008), "For sport consumers, sport teams play a significant role in building social relationships" (p. 362).

Health issues will be the CSR issues researched. With the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic fundamentally changing the lives of millions nationwide, examining how the NFL has been able to promote safety for their fans and players is a timely issue to discuss. Breast cancer awareness messaging will also be analyzed, as this is one of the league's most prominent CSR promotions, to raise awareness for the effect breast cancer has on women who have been diagnosed as well as the effect it has on family and friends.

RQ1: How are different CSR themes perceived by sports fans?

H1: The closer someone is to COVID-19, the more positive their attitude toward ads highlighting this issue.

H2: The closer someone is to the issue of cancer, the more positive their attitude toward ads highlighting this issue.

H3: The stronger the salience of COVID-19, the more positive the attitude toward the ad depicting this issue.

H4: The stronger the salience of cancer, the more positive the attitude toward the ad depicting this issue.

H5: The closer someone is to COVID-19, the more likely they will support the NFL's CSR messages promoting COVID-19 awareness.

H6: The closer someone is to the issue of cancer, the more likely they will support NFL's CSR campaigns promoting cancer awareness.

H7: The more positive attitudes towards the ad, the more likely to purchase NFL merchandise.

RQ2: Does the use of specific communication channels allow the NFL to connect more effectively with certain demographics?

H8: The more the NFL uses Facebook to promote CSR initiatives, the more they will be able to connect with older age demographics.

H9: The more the NFL uses Twitter to promote CSR initiatives, the more they will be able to connect with younger age demographics.

H10: The more passionate a football fan is, the more positive their view of CSR.

## **Methodology**

To answer the ten hypotheses and two research questions, specifically focusing on the CSR of the NFL, an online survey was administered to examine media preferences, attitude toward the NFL, issue closeness, issue salience, perception of NFL's CSR promotional strategy, and an evaluation of CSR promotion samples. Participants were first asked questions regarding

their media preferences. In an example question, participants were asked, “When you are searching for sports news, which source do you go to?” They were asked to pick the top three sources (see Appendix 1 for all questions).

Participants were then asked to indicate their attitude toward the NFL and how they perceived the league’s CSR reputation surrounding breast cancer awareness and the COVID-19 pandemic. Each question was asked on a five-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree;” 5 = “strongly agree”) adapted from Connors et. al. (2017). For example, “I feel a stronger connection to sports organizations and teams that promote social causes on and off the field.” To see all of the questions, refer to Appendix 1.

Participants were asked questions to measure level of issue closeness to both COVID-19 and breast cancer. Nominative level questions (“Yes or No”) and questions incorporating a five-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree;” 5 = “strongly agree”) adapted from Connors et. al. (2017) were used. For example, “Have you ever been diagnosed with cancer? (Yes or No).” To see all of the questions, refer to Appendix 1.

Participants were asked to indicate their level of issue salience for COVID-19 and breast cancer, both measured using questions incorporating a five-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree;” 5 = “strongly agree”) adapted from Connors et. al. (2017).” Participants were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with specific items regarding breast cancer and COVID-19. For example, “I often think about the harm cancer does to people.” To see all of the questions, refer to Appendix 1.

Participants were then asked to share their perceptions of the NFL’s CSR promotional strategy. Five-point Likert scale questions (1 = “strongly disagree;” 5 = “strongly agree”)

adapted from Connors et. al. (2017) were used to measure participant perceptions. For example, “I doubt the truthfulness of NFL’s intentions to raise awareness to breast cancer.”

Lastly, the participants evaluated CSR promotion samples and were asked to indicate if they believed the message being promoted spoke to the CSR issues being raised. Four promotional mock-ups were created for two CSR subjects: breast cancer awareness and the COVID-19 pandemic. These topics were chosen due to health issues being prominent areas of interest. Each of these promotions have become focal points of the NFL’s CSR campaigns. After viewing each of the four promotions, participants were asked to indicate the levels of their perceived CSR fit, attributions and behavioral intentions. Four posts included images featuring players during a game, fans attending the game, and merchandise promoting breast cancer awareness campaign. These pictures were obtained from social media as well as press releases featured in third party sources. They were chosen to speak to two of the CSR issues currently being promoted by the NFL. The questions posed were measured using a Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree;” 5 = “strongly agree”) adapted from Connors et. al. (2017). An example question includes “this promotion is pleasant.”

Upon reviewing each of the four promotional mock-ups, participants were also asked questions to indicate their intent to start watching or continuing watching NFL games and their intent to purchase NFL merchandise. Each question was asked on a five-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree;” 5 = “strongly agree”) adapted from Connors et. al. (2017). For example, “This promotion encourages me to purchase NFL merchandise that supports cancer awareness (1 = “strongly disagree;” 5 = “strongly agree”).” To see all of the questions, refer to Appendix 1.

A total of 245 participants were recruited from a small college in the northeastern United States. As a monetary incentive for participating, participants were entered into a sweepstakes

competition for a Starbucks gift card. The survey was given via Google Forms through various email channels. Once all data were analyzed and tables created, linear regression was used to determine significant differences between the variables. Correlation to determine statistical significance level, the following p-value was set:  $p < 0.1$ .

### **Results**

Within the 245 participants, 185 were female, 55 were male, and 5 were non-binary. Of the 245 participants, 224 were White/Caucasian, 9 were Hispanic/Latino, 3 were Black/African American, 8 were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1 Other. The higher levels of females and whites is consistent with the demographic of Elizabethtown College, where the sample was collected. Within the 245 participants, 94.9% of them were between the ages 18 to 23. The remaining 5.1% were between the ages 24-28.

To investigate each research questions, a simple linear regression was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between a dependent variable and a set of independent variables. P-values were analyzed to determine statistical significance; upon determining statistical significance, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is analyzed to determine how well the regression model fits the observed data. A statistical software known as SPSS is used to analyze the quantifiable data.

Hypothesis 1 predicted the level of personal connection to COVID-19 would be positively associated with favorable views of the NFL's COVID-19 CSR messages. Each of the two promotions featuring COVID-19 CSR messaging were analyzed. For the first COVID-19 promotion, no statistical significance was found between the COVID-19 personal significance level and either of the independent variables used to measure evaluation of promotion. For the second COVID-19 promotion, statistical significance was found between the COVID-19

personal significance level and pleasantness Level ( $p = 0.006$ ) in the second COVID-19 promotion. Statistical significance was also found between COVID-19 personal significance level and level of interest ( $p = 0.035$ ). Analyzing the coefficient of determination, it was found to be 0.113, meaning there is a weak positive relationship between personal significance level and the pleasantness level and interest level of the second COVID-19 promotion. Only 11.3% of the data fits the regression model. The results for both promotions can be examined further in **Figure 1**. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 can be partially supported.

Hypothesis 2 predicted the level of personal connection to breast cancer awareness would be positively associated with favorable views of the NFL's breast cancer CSR messages. Each of the two promotions featuring breast cancer awareness messaging were analyzed. The dependent level measured was the change in personal significance level; the independent variables were the pleasantness levels, the interest levels of each promotion for breast cancer, and if it spoke to the issue of cancer. The first breast cancer promotion had statistical significance only between breast cancer awareness significance level and pleasantness level ( $p = 0.095$ ) and interest level ( $p = 0.030$ ). Analyzing the coefficient of determination, it was found to be 0.060, meaning there is weak positive relationship between personal significance level and the pleasantness level and interest level of the first breast cancer promotion. Only six percent of the data fits the regression model.

The second breast cancer promotion had statistical significance between breast cancer awareness significance level and all three independent variables – pleasantness level ( $p = 0.041$ ), level of interest ( $p = 0.012$ ), and if it speaks to the issue of breast cancer ( $p = 0.068$ ). Analyzing the coefficient of determination, it was determined to be 0.049, meaning a weak positive relationship exists between the dependent and independent variables for the second breast cancer



promotion. Only 4.9 percent of the data fits the regression model. The results for both promotions can be examined further in **Figure 2**. In conclusion, Hypothesis 2 can be partially supported by the data.

Hypothesis 3 predicted the issue salience of COVID-19 would be positively associated with favorable views towards NFL CSR ads highlighting COVID-19. Each of the two promotions featuring COVID-19 CSR messaging were analyzed. Each promotion was judged by differing matters speaking to issue salience (i.e., job prospects, money loss, ability to transfer COVID-19). These served as the dependent variables; the independent variables were the attitudes toward the promotions (pleasantness level, level of interest, and speaks to COVID-19).

For the first COVID-19 promotion analyzing job prospects, there was no statistical significance between job prospects and attitudes toward the promotion. Looking at money loss, there was no statistical significance between money loss and attitudes toward the promotion. Looking at transfer of COVID-19, statistical significance was found with all three metrics: pleasantness level ( $p = 0.047$ ), level of interest ( $p = 0.053$ ), and speaks to COVID-19 ( $p = 0.004$ ).

**Figure 3** provides the p-value for the variables. Analyzing the coefficient of determination, it was determined to be 0.006, meaning there is little to no relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. While a practical significance may exist, 0.6% of the data fits the regression model.

For the second COVID-19 promotion analyzing job prospects, there was statistical significance found with whether the promotion spoke to the COVID-19 issue ( $p = 0.031$ ) (see **Figure 4**). However, upon reviewing the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.019$ ), a weak positive relationship was found between the dependent and independent variables. Looking at money loss, statistical significance was found only with if the ad spoke to COVID-19 ( $p = 0.031$ )

(see **Figure 5**). Analyzing the coefficient of determination, it was found to be 0.028, meaning there is a weak positive relationship between the dependent variables and independent variables. Looking at transfer of COVID-19, statistical significance was found only with pleasantness level ( $p = 0.009$ ) and whether the ad speaks to the COVID-19 issue ( $p = 0.088$ ) (see **Figure 6**). Analyzing the coefficient of determination, it was found to be 0.055, meaning there is little to no relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. Therefore, considering the statistical analyses of both COVID-19 promotions, Hypothesis 3 can be only partially supported.

Hypothesis 4 predicted the issue salience of breast cancer awareness would be positively associated with favorable views towards NFL CSR ads highlighting breast cancer. Each of the two promotions featuring breast cancer awareness messaging were analyzed. Each promotion was also judged by two differing matters speaking to issue salience (i.e., cancer research and interest level of cancer). These served as the dependent variables; the independent variables were the attitudes toward the promotions (pleasantness level, level of interest, and speaks to breast cancer).

For the first breast cancer promotion analyzing cancer research, there was statistical significance found between level of cancer research and the pleasantness level ( $p = 0.037$ ) and level of interest in the promotion ( $p = 0.009$ ) (see **Figure 7**). Analyzing the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.035$ ), a weak positive relationship existed between the dependent variable and independent variables for the first breast cancer promotion. Looking at interest level of cancer, there was statistical significance found only with pleasantness level ( $p = 0.012$ ) (see **Figure 8**). Analyzing the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.047$ ), a weak positive relationship exists between the dependent variable and independent variables.

For the second breast cancer promotion analyzing cancer research, there was statistical significance with level of interest ( $p = 0.017$ ) and if it speaks to breast cancer ( $p = 0.018$ ) (see **Figure 9**). Analyzing the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.037$ ), a weak positive relationship exists between the dependent variable and independent variables. Looking at Interest Level of Cancer, there was statistical significance with both pleasantness level ( $p = 0.054$ ). and level of interest in promotion ( $p = 0.008$ ) (see **Figure 10**). Analyzing the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.098$ ), a weak positive relationship exists between the dependent variable and independent variables. Therefore, considering the statistical analysis of both Breast Cancer Awareness posts, Hypothesis 4 is partially supported.

Hypothesis 5 predicted closeness to COVID-19 would be positively associated with the NFL's CSR messaging surrounding COVID-19. The two independent levels analyzed were as follows: the Level of Worry Catching COVID-19 and Level of Trust in NFL's COVID-19 CSR. Upon analysis, there was no statistical significance between the personal level of COVID-19 and likelihood to support the NFL's COVID CSR messaging (see **Figure 11**). Therefore, Hypothesis 5 cannot be supported.

Hypothesis 6 predicted closeness to Breast Cancer would be positively associated with the NFL's CSR messaging surrounding breast cancer awareness. Upon analysis, there was statistical significance between how personal Breast Cancer was and the likelihood to support the NFL's Breast Cancer CSR messaging ( $p = 0.011$ ). Upon analyzing the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.026$ ), a weak positive relationship was identified between the dependent variable and independent variables. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 can only be partially supported; while there is a certain level of practical significance as well as statistical significance, the

relationship between the variables is not strong enough to determine there is a relationship (see **Figure 12**).

Hypothesis 7 predicted affirmative attitudes towards CSR ads was positively associated with purchase intent for NFL merchandise. Each promotion is analyzed with the dependent variable being Intent to Purchase Level and the dependent variables being Pleasantness Level and Speaks to the Issue. Beginning with the COVID-19 promotions, the first COVID-19 promotion had statistical significance with Intent to Purchase Level and Pleasantness Level ( $p = 0.001$ ); statistical significance was also found between Intent to Purchase Level and Speaks to the Issue ( $p = 0.084$ ) (see **Figure 13**). Upon analyzing the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.097$ ), there is a weak positive relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. The second COVID-19 promotion had statistical significance with Intent to Purchase Level and Pleasantness Level ( $p = 0.000$ ). (see **Figure 14**). Upon analyzing the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.113$ ), there is a weak positive relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables.

Looking at the first Breast Cancer promotion, there was statistical significance between Intent to Purchase Level and Pleasantness Level ( $p = 0.013$ ); statistical significance was also found between Intent to Purchase Level and Speaks to the Issue ( $p = 0.001$ ). (see **Figure 15**). Upon analyzing the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.126$ ), a weak positive relationship exists between the dependent variable and independent variables. Looking at the second Breast Cancer promotion, there is statistical significance only between Intent to Purchase Level and Speaks to the Issue ( $p = 0.009$ ) (see **Figure 16**). Analyzing the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.077$ ), a weak positive relationship exists between the dependent variable and independent variable. Considering the results of the data, Hypothesis 7 can only be partially supported. While

statistical significance was found between certain dependent and independent variables, the correlations are not strong enough to support the hypothesis.

Hypotheses 8 and 9 were not evaluated in the research due to a lack of diversity within the age demographic. Hypothesis 10 predicted the passion level of a football fan is positively associated with perception of CSR. The independent variable is Passion Level, and the dependent variable is View of CSR. Upon statistical analysis, there was no statistically significant relationship between Passion Level and View of CSR (see **Figure 17**). Therefore, Hypothesis 10 cannot be supported.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The results from this survey are inconclusive. There are variables that show statistical significance, but given the weak correlation levels between certain dependent and independent variables, the results cannot support the hypotheses. These results could indicate people may not pay attention to the CSR promotions developed by different corporations. A comment from one of the participants echoed this point: “professional football players, just like any other adult going into the work day, should not be bringing politics into the workplace.” Others disregard CSR messages because they only watch the games. Nevertheless, certain variables do affirm the hypotheses posed. The level of personal significance to breast cancer showed favorable reactions regarding Pleasantness and Level of Interest. It can also be surmised the content featured in specific promotions may encourage more favorable engagement patterns. For example, the breast cancer awareness promotion featuring the fans speaking up on behalf of breast cancer awareness received more positive views than the breast cancer awareness promotion featuring the pink merchandise for players; they may see promotions such as the latter as means of self-promotion, whereas the former promotion shows people. Thus, they may feel a sense of belonging. Again,

the results featured in this survey are inconclusive, so further research into these subject matters would aid in better understanding the CSR promotional strategy.

### **Limitations & Further Research**

Thinking about research conducted from the survey, some of the limitations included a lack of diversity. The sample for the survey was taken from a small university where the community is predominantly white, meaning there is little to no racial diversity providing a more diverse sample. There is also not as much diversity as 72% of the sample were female. While this is representative of the college community where this survey was distributed, these statistics are not representative of the larger population. Age is also another limitation to consider. The hope was to get a larger sample with college students as well as faculty, alumni and staff. While the sample is 245, the range of ages is 18-23. This decreases the amount of diversity in the sample because it decreases the amount of demographics to compare. Lastly, the concept of timeliness is an important limitation to consider. One such limitation was surrounding COVID-19. Given the lingering threat of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on health and safety, some participants may still feel uneasy about the COVID-19 pandemic and its level of severity; however, others may feel it is time to move on from COVID-19, and that it is not as extreme as it seems. Possibly measuring COVID-19 CSR messages when the number of cases were rising rapidly in 2020 would show different results. Evaluating racial equality is an example of getting timely data. Given the prominence of racial equality, the concept of systemic racism, and the sentencing of Derek Chauvin, the officer who killed George Floyd, this issue has become a large area of discussion and has generated a great deal of attention. The fact that the survey was distributed during the time of the trial, a plethora of insights could have been analyzed.

Further research might include various trends in perceptions of other CSR messages. The results may show different trends when looking at the perceptions of CSR promotions. Another consideration for further research is to consider timeliness and the role it plays in the changing perception of CSR campaigns. Thinking about how the NFL dedicates the month of October to their *A Crucial Catch* breast cancer awareness campaign, perhaps timing the survey around October may show different levels of results. Lastly, looking into other sports organizations based in the United States and analyzing their CSR campaigns and their stakeholders' perceptions of the promoted messages.

### **Conclusion**

The present study provides a glimpse of research that has not been done frequently in this area. As businesses strive to present themselves as wholesome organizations dedicated to providing the best products and services for their stakeholders, this information could be extremely relevant and vital to consider. For the NFL, this type of research could be extremely beneficial, as it allows them to have a pulse on their external environment and understand individual feelings around specific subject matters. It also allows them to adjust their strategies to better target their audiences. This research also sheds light on the importance of understanding perceptions along with demographics. Different attitudes can lead to varied success rate of CSR campaigns; as such, organizations need to be able to develop specialized messages that address those various perceptions. Overall, the hope is that this study opens the door to more opportunities for further research, and that the concept of CSR continues to be explored; it is growing rapidly, so organizations should understand how to use it effectively.

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## Appendix 1

**Survey Questions****Beginning Questions: Who is the Participant?**

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your ethnicity?
  - Caucasian or White
  - Hispanic or Latino
  - Black or African American
  - Asian/Pacific Islander
  - Other
3. What gender do you identify with?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Non-binary
  - Prefer not to answer
  - Other

**Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Please write a number next to each statement to indicate *the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. (1 being Strongly Disagree and 5 being Strongly Agree).***

I see myself as:

4. extraverted, enthusiastic
5. critical, quarrelsome
6. dependable, self-disciplined
7. anxious, easily upset
8. open to new experiences, complex
9. reserved, quiet
10. sympathetic, warm
11. disorganized, careless
12. calm, emotionally stable
13. conventional, uncreative

Source: Itani, O. S., Haddad, R. E., & Kalra, A. (2019). Exploring the role of extrovert-introvert customers' personality prototype as a driver of customer engagement: Does relationship duration matter? *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 1-14.

**Media Preference Questions**

14. On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being not at all to 10 being all the time, how often do you use social media?
15. Of the following list of social media platforms, pick the top three social media platforms you use for sports news.
- Facebook
  - Twitter
  - YouTube
  - Instagram
  - LinkedIn
  - Reddit
  - Pinterest
16. When you are searching for sports news, which source do you go to (pick the top 3)?
- a. Social media (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube)
  - b. Cable providers (Comcast, COX, Verizon FIOS)
  - c. Satellite providers (DirectTV, Dish)
  - d. Apps on phone (ESPN, CBS Sports, etc.)
  - e. Local news networks
  - f. Radio
  - g. Other:
17. Which channels/apps do you watch to get sports information?
- a. ESPN
  - b. CBS Sports
  - c. FOX Sports
  - d. NBC Sports
  - e. Other

**Pretest Survey****TO MEASURE ISSUE CLOSENESS:**

Cancer:

18. Have you ever been diagnosed with cancer? (Yes or No)\_\_\_\_\_
19. Do you have anyone in your family or close circle of friends who had/has cancer? (Yes or No)\_\_\_\_\_
20. The topic of cancer has personal significance to me.
- Strongly Disagree
  - Disagree

- Neither
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

The COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic:

21. Have you been diagnosed with COVID-19? (Yes or No) \_\_\_\_\_
22. Do you know of anyone in your family or close circle of friends who was diagnosed with Covid-19? (Yes or No) \_\_\_\_\_
23. The topic of COVID-19 has personal significance to me.
1. Strongly Disagree
  2. Disagree
  3. Neither
  4. Agree
  5. Strongly Agree

### **TO MEASURE ISSUE SALIENCE:**

To what extent do you believe the statements below apply to you? After each statement, please choose one of the numbers that you agree with most (1 being “Strongly Disagree” and 5 being “Strongly Agree”).

Cancer:

24. I often think about the harm cancer does to people.
25. I follow the news on advancements in cancer research.
26. I really don't spend much time thinking about cancer.
27. I often worry about what cancer could do to me or my family.
28. I am really not interested in cancer-related issues.

### **TO MEASURE PANDEMIC SALIENCE:**

The following questions ask about how you are currently feeling about the COVID-19 pandemic (answer on a 1-5 scale, 5 strongly agree)

29. I'm worried that I will catch COVID- 19
30. I'm worried that family and friends will catch COVID-19
31. I'm afraid to leave the house right now
32. I'm worried I might transmit the infection to someone else

- 33. I'm worried about missing work
- 34. I'm worried about the amount of money I have coming in.
- 35. I'm worried about the long-term impact the pandemic will have on my job prospects and the economy

**To what extent do you believe the statements below apply to the National Football League (NFL)? After each statement, please choose one of the numbers that you agree with most (1 being “Strongly Disagree” and 5 being “Strongly Agree”).**

- 36. The NFL is concerned about the issue of cancer.
- 37. The NFL is concerned about the issue of the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic.

### **TO MEASURE SUPPORT FOR CSR:**

For the following series of statements, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree (1 being “Strongly Disagree” and 5 being “Strongly Agree”).

- 38. I am glad to see that the NFL fights to improve global health outcomes.
- 39. The National Football League has an obligation to be socially responsible.
- 40. The National Football League should regularly make donations to charity or promote charitable causes.
- 41. I strongly believe that the National Football League should support programs and efforts that benefit cancer patients and their families.
- 42. The National Football League should promote messages of safety regarding the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic.

Source: Connors, S., Anderson-MacDonald, S., & Thomson, M. (2017). Overcoming the ‘window dressing’ effect: Mitigating the negative effects of inherent skepticism towards corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 145(3), 599-621.

### **TO MEASURE SKEPTICISM FOR CSR:**

Social responsibility is an ethical concept that suggests an individual or organization has a obligation to seek out ways to benefit their community. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about sports organizations’ dedication to social responsibility and then the questions about the National Football League (1 being “Strongly Disagree” and 5 being “Strongly Agree”):

- 43. I do not trust sports organizations to deliver on their social responsibility promises.
- 44. Sports organizations are usually dishonest about their real involvement in social responsibility initiatives.
- 45. In general, I am not convinced that sports organizations will fulfill their social responsibility objectives
- 46. The NFL is actively trying to give back to their community.
- 47. The NFL wants to keep its existing customers (fanbase).
- 48. The NFL uses CSR messages to gain more fans.



Source: Connors, S., Anderson-MacDonald, S., & Thomson, M. (2017). Overcoming the ‘window dressing’ effect: Mitigating the negative effects of inherent skepticism towards corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 145(3), 599-621.

I doubt the truthfulness of NFL’s intentions to raise awareness to:

49. Breast Cancer	1	2	3	4	5
50. The Covid-19 pandemic	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the National Football League (1 being “Strongly Disagree” and 5 being “Strongly Agree”). As you answer these questions, think of your typical behaviors before the COVID-19 pandemic hit the U.S. in March 2020.

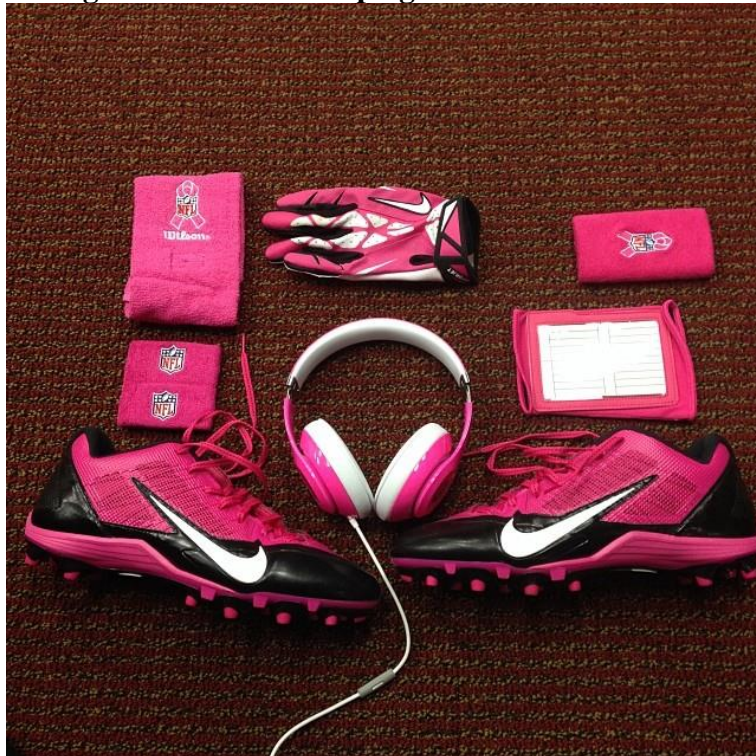
51. I enjoy watching NFL games. \_\_\_\_\_
52. I would rather attend an NFL game in person instead of watching it on TV. \_\_\_\_\_
53. I would rather watch an NFL game with family or friends instead of alone. \_\_\_\_\_
54. I enjoy talking about NFL games with family and friends. \_\_\_\_\_
55. I block out time to watch NFL games. \_\_\_\_\_
56. To me, messages about social causes are distracting from an NFL game. \_\_\_\_\_
57. An NFL game should be a place without politics or any other messages promoted.  
\_\_\_\_\_
58. I feel a stronger connection to sports organizations and teams that promote social causes on and off the field. \_\_\_\_\_

Source: Billings, A. C., & Ruibley, B. J. (2013). Why We Watch, Why We Play: The Relationship Between Fantasy Sport and Fanship Motivations. *Mass Communication and Society*, 16, 5-25.

**Observing NFL CSR promotions:**

**Below are several promotions from different platforms featuring the National Football League. Please take a moment to look at each promotion; then, indicate your opinions about the promotions by choosing a number that you agree with most (1 being “Strongly Disagree” and 5 being “Strongly Agree”).**

**Every year, the NFL produces pink merchandise for players, coaches and staff to wear during their October campaign to raise awareness of breast cancer.**



59. This promotion is pleasant. \_\_\_\_\_
60. This promotion is uninteresting. \_\_\_\_\_
61. This promotion speaks to cancer awareness. \_\_\_\_\_
62. This promotion encourages me to start or continue watching NFL games
63. This promotion encourages me to purchase NFL merchandise that supports cancer awareness.
64. This promotion doesn't convince me that NFL truly cares about cancer awareness.

**Due to the spread of COVID-19, NFL implements policies for reduced stadium seating, cleaning and disinfection.**



- 65. This promotion is pleasant. \_\_\_\_\_
- 66. This promotion is uninteresting. \_\_\_\_\_
- 67. This promotion speaks to COVID-19 awareness. \_\_\_\_\_
- 68. This promotion encourages me to start or continue watching NFL games
- 69. This promotion encourages me to purchase NFL merchandise that supports pandemic awareness and prevention.
- 70. This promotion doesn't convince me that NFL truly cares about pandemic awareness and prevention.



**The NFL offers opportunities for their teams to show support for advocacy for breast cancer awareness.**



- 71. This promotion is pleasant. \_\_\_\_\_
- 72. This promotion is uninteresting. \_\_\_\_\_
- 73. This promotion speaks to cancer awareness. \_\_\_\_\_
- 74. This promotion encourages me to start or continue watching NFL games. \_\_\_\_\_
- 75. This promotion encourages me to purchase NFL merchandise that supports cancer awareness.
- 76. This promotion doesn't convince me that NFL truly cares about cancer awareness.

**The NFL requires players, coaches and other personnel to wear masks on sideline during the game.**



- 77. This promotion is pleasant. \_\_\_\_\_
- 78. This promotion is uninteresting. \_\_\_\_\_
- 79. This promotion speaks to COVID-19 awareness. \_\_\_\_\_
- 80. This promotion encourages me to start or continue watching NFL games
- 81. This promotion encourages me to purchase NFL merchandise that supports pandemic awareness and prevention.
- 82. This promotion doesn't convince me that NFL truly cares about pandemic awareness and prevention.

## Appendix 2

Figure 1.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	90.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	3.313	.501		6.613	.000	2.486	4.140
	This promotion is pleasant.	.062	.078	.060	.791	.430	-.067	.191
	The promotion is uninteresting.	.029	.084	.027	.348	.728	-.110	.169
	This promotion is pleasant.	.195	.070	.217	2.779	.006	.079	.310
	This promotion is uninteresting	-.158	.075	-.154	-2.123	.035	-.282	-.035

a. Dependent Variable: The topic of COVID-19 has personal significance to me.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.336 <sup>a</sup>	.113	.106	1.067	.113	15.285	2	240	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), This promotion is uninteresting, This promotion is pleasant.

Figure 2.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.930	.770		3.807	.000
	This promotion is pleasant.	.159	.119	.100	1.330	.185
	The promotion is uninteresting.	-.225	.098	-.159	-2.289	.023
	This promotion speaks to cancer awareness.	.046	.113	.029	.409	.683
	This promotion is pleasant.	.044	.090	.041	.493	.623
	The promotion is uninteresting.	.014	.087	.012	.166	.869
	This promotion speaks to COVID-19 awareness.	.080	.090	.068	.883	.378

a. Dependent Variable: The topic of cancer has personal significance to me.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.245 <sup>a</sup>	.060	.049	1.157	.060	5.151	3	241	.002

a. Predictors: (Constant), This promotion speaks to cancer awareness., The promotion is uninteresting., This promotion is pleasant.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.222 <sup>a</sup>	.049	.037	1.166	.049	4.139	3	240	.007

a. Predictors: (Constant), This promotion speaks to cancer awareness., The promotion is uninteresting., This promotion is pleasant.

Figure 3.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.330	.533		8.117	.000
	This promotion is pleasant.	.186	.093	.162	1.995	.047
	The promotion is uninteresting.	-.178	.091	-.145	-1.945	.053
	This promotion speaks to COVID-19 awareness.	-.275	.094	-.222	-2.923	.004

a. Dependent Variable: I'm worried I might transmit the COVID-19 virus to someone else.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.077 <sup>a</sup>	.006	-.006	1.139	.006	.482	3	240	.695

a. Predictors: (Constant), This promotion speaks to COVID-19 awareness., The promotion is uninteresting., This promotion is pleasant.



Figure 4.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.099	.400		10.248	.000
	This promotion is pleasant.	.081	.078	.090	1.050	.295
	This promotion is uninteresting	-.030	.076	-.029	-.397	.692
	This promotion speaks to COVID-19 awareness.	-.171	.079	-.173	-2.165	.031

a. Dependent Variable: I'm worried about the long-term impact COVID-19 will have on my job prospects and the economy.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.139 <sup>a</sup>	.019	.007	1.130	.019	1.577	3	241	.196

a. Predictors: (Constant), This promotion speaks to COVID-19 awareness., This promotion is uninteresting, This promotion is pleasant.

Figure 5.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.764	.437		8.606	.000
	This promotion is pleasant.	.104	.085	.105	1.227	.221
	This promotion is uninteresting	-.115	.084	-.101	-1.381	.168
	This promotion speaks to COVID-19 awareness.	-.187	.086	-.172	-2.170	.031

a. Dependent Variable: Because of COVID-19, I'm worried about losing money.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.166 <sup>a</sup>	.028	.015	1.235	.028	2.273	3	241	.081

a. Predictors: (Constant), This promotion speaks to COVID-19 awareness., This promotion is uninteresting, This promotion is pleasant.

Figure 6.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.473	.435		7.982	.000
	This promotion is pleasant.	.221	.084	.222	2.622	.009
	This promotion is uninteresting	-.082	.083	-.071	-.981	.328
	This promotion speaks to COVID-19 awareness.	-.147	.086	-.135	-1.713	.088

a. Dependent Variable: I'm worried I might transmit the COVID-19 virus to someone else.

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.214 <sup>a</sup>	.046	.034	1.229	.046	3.843	3	241	.010

a. Predictors: (Constant), This promotion speaks to COVID-19 awareness., This promotion is uninteresting, This promotion is pleasant.

Figure 7.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.838	.471		8.141	.000
	This promotion is pleasant.	-.177	.084	-.155	-2.098	.037
	The promotion is uninteresting.	-.186	.070	-.183	-2.638	.009
	This promotion speaks to cancer awareness.	.017	.082	.015	.207	.836

a. Dependent Variable: I follow the news on advancements in cancer research.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	90.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	3.838	.471		8.141	.000	3.060	4.617
	This promotion is pleasant.	-.177	.084	-.155	-2.098	.037	-.316	-.038
	The promotion is uninteresting.	-.186	.070	-.183	-2.638	.009	-.302	-.069
	This promotion speaks to cancer awareness.	.017	.082	.015	.207	.836	-.118	.151

a. Dependent Variable: I follow the news on advancements in cancer research.

Figure 8.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.636	.480		5.492	.000
	This promotion is pleasant.	-.218	.086	-.187	-2.542	.012
	The promotion is uninteresting.	.091	.072	.088	1.277	.203
	This promotion speaks to cancer awareness.	.061	.083	.052	.733	.464

a. Dependent Variable: I am really not interested in cancer-related issues.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.187 <sup>a</sup>	.035	.023	.844	.035	2.924	3	241	.035

a. Predictors: (Constant), This promotion speaks to cancer awareness., The promotion is uninteresting., This promotion is pleasant.

Figure 9.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	3.561	.420		.000
	This promotion is pleasant.	.077	.077	.077	.319
	The promotion is uninteresting.	-.210	.088	-.167	.017
	This promotion speaks to cancer awareness.	-.182	.076	-.187	.018

a. Dependent Variable: I follow the news on advancements in cancer research.

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.193 <sup>a</sup>	.037	.025	.844	.037	3.087	3	240	.028

a. Predictors: (Constant), This promotion speaks to cancer awareness., The promotion is uninteresting., This promotion is pleasant.

Figure 10.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.606	.416		6.259	.000
	This promotion is pleasant.	-.147	.076	-.144	-1.936	.054
	The promotion is uninteresting.	.232	.087	.180	2.661	.008
	This promotion speaks to cancer awareness.	-.074	.076	-.074	-.976	.330

a. Dependent Variable: I am really not interested in cancer-related issues.

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.314 <sup>a</sup>	.098	.087	.837	.098	8.725	3	240	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), This promotion speaks to cancer awareness., The promotion is uninteresting., This promotion is pleasant.

Figure 11.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	90.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2.726	.235		11.617	.000	2.339	3.114
	I'm worried that family and friends will catch COVID-19.	.023	.080	.025	.289	.773	-.110	.156
	I'm worried that I will catch COVID-19.	.087	.071	.108	1.219	.224	-.031	.205

a. Dependent Variable: I doubt the truthfulness of the NFL's intentions to raise awareness to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 12.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	90.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2.372	.241		9.841	.000	1.974	2.770
	I often worry about what cancer could do to me or my family.	.180	.070	.162	2.565	.011	.064	.295

a. Dependent Variable: I doubt the truthfulness of the NFL's intentions to raise awareness to breast cancer.

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.162 <sup>a</sup>	.026	.022	1.012	.026	6.578	1	243	.011

a. Predictors: (Constant), I often worry about what cancer could do to me or my family.

Figure 13.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	90.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	.558	.354		1.574	.117	-.027	1.143
	This promotion is pleasant.	.207	.062	.265	3.330	.001	.105	.310
	The promotion is uninteresting.	.081	.061	.097	1.334	.183	-.019	.181
	This promotion speaks to COVID-19 awareness.	.108	.062	.129	1.736	.084	.005	.211

a. Dependent Variable: This promotion encourages me to purchase NFL merchandise that supports COVID-19 awareness.

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.311 <sup>a</sup>	.097	.086	.811	.097	8.548	3	239	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), This promotion speaks to COVID-19 awareness., The promotion is uninteresting., This promotion is pleasant.



Figure 14.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	90.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.165	.301		3.865	.000	.667	1.663
	This promotion is pleasant.	.222	.058	.309	3.793	.000	.125	.318
	This promotion is uninteresting	-.013	.058	-.016	-.223	.824	-.108	.082
	This promotion speaks to COVID-19 awareness.	.023	.059	.030	.396	.693	-.075	.122

a. Dependent Variable: This promotion encourages me to purchase NFL merchandise that supports COVID-19 awareness and prevention.

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.336 <sup>a</sup>	.113	.102	.851	.113	10.245	3	241	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), This promotion speaks to COVID-19 awareness., This promotion is uninteresting, This promotion is pleasant.

Figure 15.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	90.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	.411	.558		.736	.462	-.511	1.332
	This promotion is pleasant.	.249	.099	.178	2.516	.013	.086	.413
	The promotion is uninteresting.	-.005	.083	-.004	-.064	.949	-.142	.132
	This promotion speaks to cancer awareness.	.336	.096	.238	3.504	.001	.178	.495

a. Dependent Variable: This promotion encourages me to purchase NFL merchandise that supports cancer awareness.

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.356 <sup>a</sup>	.126	.116	.990	.126	11.536	3	239	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), This promotion speaks to cancer awareness., The promotion is uninteresting., This promotion is pleasant.

Figure 16.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	90.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	.955	.547		1.746	.082	.052	1.859
	This promotion is pleasant.	.132	.100	.099	1.320	.188	-.033	.297
	The promotion is uninteresting.	-.030	.114	-.018	-.261	.794	-.219	.159
	This promotion speaks to cancer awareness.	.263	.100	.203	2.639	.009	.098	.427

a. Dependent Variable: This promotion encourages me to purchase NFL merchandise that supports cancer awareness.

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.278 <sup>a</sup>	.077	.066	1.100	.077	6.712	3	240	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), This promotion speaks to cancer awareness., The promotion is uninteresting., This promotion is pleasant.

Figure 17.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	90.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	3.786	.223		16.996	.000	3.418	4.153
	I enjoy watching NFL games.	-.093	.059	-.101	-1.575	.116	-.190	.004

a. Dependent Variable: I feel a stronger connection to sports organizations and teams that promote social causes on and off the field.